

Head Over Heels by rycbar3

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Summary: **A slightly AU story** If Jonathan had a girlfriend in 'Stranger Things'. Begins with their first kiss in '82 and ends during Christmas in '83. Jonathan/OFC & Nancy/Steve. No Jancy, sorry.

1. Love Reign o'er Me

September 29, 1982

Jonathan Byers felt like he was living in a dream. It seemed surreal that he was going out that night with Clara Dreyfuss. Sure, they were going out as friends to a concert in Indianapolis, but he still couldn't believe that she'd asked *him* to go with her. He watched her from across the cafeteria as she ate lunch with her friends, laughing and joking.

He'd been nervous when they were partnered together for their photography assignment, unsure about how they would get along and whether it would be awkward between them. Yet, Clara had a natural confidence that quickly put him at ease. She was easy to talk to and she always gave him the feeling that she enjoyed talking to him.

She was one of the popular kids in the school, but it wasn't because she was rich or beautiful or a bully – it was because she was *nice*. To everyone.

Jonathan had always kind of admired her from afar. She had this kind of brightness to her that pulled him in. When they'd started working together his admiration had developed into feelings of a different kind and he couldn't be around her without getting incredibly nervous. He didn't want to ruin what little semblance of a friendship that they had though and therefore tried to keep his feelings in check.

Jonathan panicked when Clara turned in her seat to look at him, and he quickly glanced away, missing the smile she had at seeing him.

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"I told him that he'll be a star one day, and he just turned around and said 'baby, I'm already a star, it's just that I'm the only one who knows it yet'".

Clara recounted her earlier conversation with her friend Leroy, deepening her voice to imitate him. Her friends, who were sitting

around their lunch table just laughed.

"You have to admit that he's insanely talented," Viv, Clara's best friend commented.

Clara hummed in agreement, taking a bite of her lunch. She looked over to her left when her friend Maddie tapped her on the shoulder.

"Jonathan Byers is staring at you," Maddie commented to her quietly.

Maddie's gaze was fixed onto the other side of the room and Clara followed her line of sight. Sure enough, Jonathan was staring right at her. She sent him a wide smile, but as soon as their eyes met, he quickly looked away.

His shy and reserved nature still took her off-guard at times, but Clara wouldn't change a thing about him. She felt excitement bubble inside of her as she thought of the concert they were going to that night. Her uncle worked as a roadie for the Who and had given her two tickets to their Indianapolis show that night. She had almost instantly asked Jonathan to go with her, and was overjoyed when he accepted.

"Hey, aren't you two going to that concert tonight?" Maddie asked, as though she could read Clara's thoughts.

"Oh yeah!" Viv cut in. "Do you think he'll finally make a move? You've liked him for ages!"

Clara felt her face heat up at Viv's words, only confirming what her friend had stated. It still felt surreal to her. She'd had a crush on Jonathan for a while before they were partnered together in photography. Their assignment allowed her to get to know him better, and without realising it, her crush developed into something more.

"He's so shy," Clara said. "I don't think he'd try anything."

"Is it just me, or do you sound disappointed?" Viv teased.

Clara blushed once again and lightly shoved Viv's shoulder, signalling for her to shut up.

"Are you nervous?" Maddie asked.

"Yes," Clara admitted. "But I don't want to make things awkward between us, so I'm just going to try and act naturally."

"Sometimes I think you're *too* level headed, Clara," Viv told her.

"You haven't seen me around him, Viv," she argued. "I can't stop blushing and it's like I've got butterflies in my stomach. It's insanely hard to keep my cool around him."

Her friends just laughed, reassuring her that everything would be fine. For Clara, the evening couldn't come quickly enough.

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Later that afternoon when Clara heard the doorbell and opened the door she almost melted on the spot. There wasn't anything different about Jonathan, he was just the same as he always was, but the fact that she was going out with him that night caused her to feel like she was seeing him for the first time and falling for him all over again.

He gave her a small smile, bringing her back to reality and she stepped out of the house, giving him a smile in return.

"Hi," she said bashfully.

"Hey," he returned, seeming a bit shy himself. "Are you ready to go?"

Clara nodded, turning to lock the front door. When she turned around she saw Jonathan looking in the driveway.

"Is your mom at the hospital?" He asked.

"Yeah, she's working all night."

Jonathan frowned and she wondered what was on his mind, but didn't get a chance to ask him as he'd already started walking towards his car. She quickly moved to follow him and climbed into his passenger seat.

"I made a mix-tape," she said, pulling it out of her bag. "I hope you

don't mind."

He looked surprised but smiled at her anyway.

"No, that's fine," he said, taking it from her and putting it into the player.

He smiled when Led Zeppelin's *In the Evening* began to play.

"I love this song," he commented, smiling widely at her.

"Me too," she grinned at him in return.

He pulled out of the curb and they began the drive into the city. As they got further and further away from Hawkins, Clara slowly began to relax. She and Jonathan seemed to slip into conversation easily talking about anything and everything ranging from their families to their favourite bands to comparing the weirdest conspiracy theories they'd ever heard of. The trip seemed to fly by and before Clara knew it they were in the city.

The concert was already pretty crowded when they arrived but thanks to her uncle they had very good tickets. Clara noticed that Jonathan really perked up when the Clash, who were the support act, were playing. She smiled as she watched his enthusiasm for the music and began singing along to the songs with the rest of the crowd.

Eventually he noticed her staring and turned to look at her, confused. Their gaze was interrupted though when Clara felt herself being pushed forwards by the crowd, straight into Jonathan. Luckily, he reacted quickly and caught her in his arms. She looked up at him with an apologetic smile but felt like the air left her lungs when he helped her back onto her feet and then grasped her hand in his.

Jonathan's gaze was focused pointedly on the stage, though Clara noticed a faint pink tinge to his cheeks. She smiled to herself and subtly moved closer to him, enjoying the warmth she felt from being so close to him.

As the concert continued on, the two of them let themselves get carried away with the music, unable to really converse as it was too loud to hear each other. When the Who were on and began playing

Clara's favourite song, Baba O'Riley, she couldn't help but sing a little louder and jump up and down to the music. It was only when her hand accidentally slipped away from Jonathan's that she turned to look at him, only to find his attention was entirely focused on her.

When their eyes met, Jonathan quickly diverted his gaze, looking back at the stage. Clara was slightly taken aback and just watched him for a moment before her body seemed to act on its own. Jonathan's eyes widened when her hand came up to cup his cheek, tilting his head towards hers. Before she could talk herself out of it, she was leaning up and pressing her lips against his.

She wasn't sure exactly what she'd expected his reaction to be, but it certainly wasn't that he'd go stock-still and give no response to her kiss whatsoever. Clara panicked, wondering if she had overstepped boundaries and made him uncomfortable. She felt like an idiot for believing that he might feel the same way about her. She pulled away from the kiss, feeling dejected. Her eyes met his and she noticed that he was in a daze more than anything else. Wanting to give him space, and still feeling like an absolute fool for kissing him, Clara stepped away from him.

She let out a yelp of surprise when she felt his hand on her arm, pulling her back towards him. Jonathan didn't waste any time, leaning down and kissing her properly. She was shocked at first, but eventually she melted into him, wrapping her arms around his neck and pressing her body closer to his. The kiss was fairly innocent, but it was enough for Clara. She couldn't believe that Jonathan Byers was actually kissing her.

They were brought back to reality when the song ended and the crowd erupted into cheers around them. Pulling back slightly, the two stared into each other's eyes. Jonathan seemed bewildered once again and Clara gave him a happy grin, which he returned with a small, bemused smile. She moved her hands from around his neck, running them down to rest on his chest.

He tried to say something to her, his hands still firmly gripping her waist, but she couldn't hear him over the music.

"What?" She asked, furrowing her brow.

He shook his head, with a small smile, silently telling her that it didn't matter. Roger Daltrey began talking up on the stage and she turned back to look in that direction. Jonathan let go of his grip on her waist, but she took a hold of his hand once again, staying close to him.

As the concert continued on, the two of them stayed close together. And although they weren't able to say anything to each other, they didn't need to. Both of them were just content to feel the other one nearby. Clara didn't think she'd ever felt so happy.

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So that was the first chapter. This story is also on ao3 and wattpad if you prefer those reading formats. My account name is always the same. Please let me know what you think! I know this chapter isn't the best, but I'm working to make future chapters better.

2. Take Me Baby and Never Let Me Go

The next morning everything felt surreal to Clara, especially since she had another regular day of school ahead of her. She and Viv sat on her front porch per their normal routine as they waited for Viv's boyfriend, Alex, to pick them up. Clara was recounting everything that had happened the night before to her friend.

"Are you serious?" Viv cried out. "He kissed you?"

"I know," Clara gushed. "I still can't believe it!"

"What happened after that?" Viv pressed.

"Well, when the song ended we kind of came back down to earth," Clara laughed. "And then we just kind of focused on the concert, but kept holding hands."

"But he didn't kiss you again after that, or anything?"

"No, but he seemed more relaxed on the drive back. I fell asleep though."

"You didn't!" Viv exclaimed. "What happened when you guys got back into town?"

"He woke me up after he'd pulled up here," Clara explained. "He was so sweet, I just wanted to stay in the car with him. But he ended up walking me to the door and I gave him a kiss on the cheek before I went inside."

"Wow," Viv sighed. "But then...what's going on between you two?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, are you dating, or not?"

"Oh..." Clara's eyes widened in realisation. "I don't know! How do you know? Do you have to confirm it, or do you just know?"

"I don't know either," Viv admitted. "When things between Alex and I

first started, he got really jealous if I even looked at other guys, but then he relentlessly flirted with Katie Jones at that party..."

Clara nodded, remembering.

"Then we had a talk and it just sort of came up," Viv continued. "I asked him what we were and he eventually said he wanted me to be his girlfriend."

Clara sighed, wondering where that left her and Jonathan. She wanted to talk to Viv more about it, but saw Alex pull up in his distinguishable red Firebird.

"I'm sure you'll work it out," Viv tried to reassure her as they stood up.

"Yeah..." Clara agreed half-heartedly, following her friend to the car.

"And one and two and three and four," Miss Grant counted as she watched over her dance class like a hawk.

However, no matter how much effort her students put in, the teacher was not pleased with the result.

"Okay everybody, stop," she said, shaking her head in frustration. "Stop."

Her students paused, catching their breath as they waited for her instructions. Miss Grant walked over to the stereo, switching off the music.

"What is this?" The woman demanded to know. "Y'all are dancing like you've got bricks for feet!"

"More like we've got a dictator instead of a teacher," Leroy mumbled to Clara.

"What was that Mr Coleman?" Miss Grant asked, as sharp as ever.

"I'm saying that even dancers are allowed to have their feet touch the ground every once in a while!" Leroy snapped.

Miss Grant let her eyes roam over the class before she sighed in acquiesce.

"Okay, everybody take five," she relented. "And then we're gonna go over it again."

Clara watched as Leroy walked over to his bag and grabbed his water bottle. She knew him well enough to know that he was agitated. Approaching him cautiously, Clara handed him a hand towel to use.

"Thanks," he mumbled, wiping his brow with it.

"You're doing really well, Leroy," she said quietly, hoping to brighten his mood.

It worked, as she saw his face light up and his lips stretch into a wide grin.

"I know," he laughed, bumping her lightly with his shoulder.

Clara laughed as well, nudging him back.

"Don't say it," he warned her.

"Say what?" She asked, pretending she didn't know.

"That I need to control my temper,"

"Well you do," she argued half-heartedly. "Your mouth is always getting you into trouble."

"That's why I've got you," he retorted. "To keep me in check."

"Yeah, yeah," she rolled her eyes with a smile. "Keep *yourself* in check, Coleman,"

Leroy just grinned, knowing that in actuality she would always be there for him, just as he'd always be there for her. The two of them resumed their positions as Miss Grant informed them that their break was over and the class got back to work.

Clara jumped when she felt someone sling their arm around her shoulder. She looked to her right to see Alex watching her with his eyebrows raised and a knowing smirk on his lips. It was his arm that was now draped around her, and so she turned to Viv on her left to see that she was looking at her expectantly too.

"What?" Clara asked, turning back to Alex.

"I asked you the same question five times," Alex informed her. "But you were too busy searching the cafeteria for Jonathan Byers to notice."

"Shut up," Clara grumbled, attempting to shrug off his arm.

Alex relented, letting go of his hold of her, but his smirk remained.

"Have you seen him yet today?" Viv asked.

Clara turned back towards her best friend and smiled sadly.

"No. We don't have any classes together on Thursday's, but I was hoping to talk to him at lunch. I wonder where he is."

Viv just shrugged, while Clara tried to ignore the sinking feeling in her stomach.

"Why don't you just talk to him after school?" Viv suggested.

"Yeah, I guess I don't have a choice," Clara agreed.

"What are you going to talk to him about?" Viv enquired.

Clara turned back to Alex, not wanting him to hear, but he'd already started up a conversation with his best friend Danny. Apparently he'd grown bored of their conversation.

"I don't know how to approach it," Clara admitted, turning back to Viv. "But I want to know what yesterday meant to *him*. Does that make sense?"

"Sure," Viv shrugged. "It couldn't hurt. Then you can see if you guys are on the same page."

"Yeah," Clara agreed. "Do you think we are? I mean, do you think we want the same thing?"

"I don't know," Viv sighed. "The only one who can tell you that is him."

"Yeah," she relented, knowing that her friend was right.

The rest of the school day went by slowly for Clara. When it was finally over, she searched for Jonathan in the parking lot but couldn't see him anywhere. Eventually she gave up, getting her usual lift home from Alex with Viv. The two girls lived only a few houses down from one another, so Alex always offered her a ride as well. When she entered her house her mother was there to greet her.

"Hey sweetie," her mom, Gina said.

"Hi mom," she smiled, setting down her bag and grabbing an apple to eat.

"How was school?"

"It was okay. Miss Grant is already pushing us hard, but I guess it's good with the auditions coming up."

"What show are you doing this year?"

"Othello," Clara told her, lighting up at the topic. "I'm auditioning for Desdemona and Leroy's auditioning for Othello!"

"Wow," Gina grinned. "That's fantastic! I bet you're really excited."

"Yeah," Clara smiled in return. "We still have to work on it a bit before the auditions though,"

"Right," her mom nodded in understanding. "Well, if you need any help from me when I'm home, you know I'm always happy to."

"Thanks mom," Clara said quietly.

Gina worked as a doctor at Hawkins General, and regularly worked

night shifts. Therefore, Clara spent more nights alone than the average teenager. She and her mother were close anyway, so whenever they were together they usually made the most of it.

She and her mother had lived on their own together ever since her parents had gotten divorced. Clara had been only 7-years-old at the time and her mom had moved the two of them from New York City and back to Gina's hometown, Hawkins. Clara's father, Lars still lived in New York and she usually visited him in the holidays.

"Mom, I'm going to go around to the Byers' house, is that okay?" She asked, taking a bite of her apple.

"Sure honey," Gina agreed. "Are you and Jonathan going to work on your project?"

"Uh, yeah," Clara nodded, getting up to leave.

"By the way," her mom called out after her. "You have to tell me how last night went later on, okay?"

"Sure mom, bye!"

Given how close she and her mother were, Gina knew all about Clara's crush on Jonathan. However, she wasn't sure how much she wanted to share with her mom just yet. Shaking off those thoughts, Clara went to grab her bike so she could ride over to Jonathan's.

When Clara arrived at the Byers house, Will was the one to greet her at the door. She'd gotten to know both Will and Joyce reasonably well as she'd come over to the house a few times to study with Jonathan.

"Hi Clara," Will said, smiling up at her.

"Hey Will, is Jonathan home?"

"Yeah, he's in his room," he stepped aside so she could enter the house.

"Thanks," she said, walking down the hall and knocking on

Jonathan's door.

"Jonathan? It's Clara, can I come in?"

She waited a few moments but didn't hear a response. She looked down the hall but Will had already disappeared to some other part of the house. Shrugging her shoulders, Clara turned the knob and opened the door. Her eyes quickly fell upon Jonathan who was sitting on his bed with his headphones on, sorting through some photographs. He looked up when she entered the room and seemed surprised by her presence. He hurriedly sat up straighter and took off his headphones.

"Clara?" He asked. "What are you doing here?"

Jonathan was surprised (to say the least) by the fact that Clara had showed up at his house like that. He hastily shoved some of the photographs he'd been sorting through underneath his pillow, behind him, leaving the rest spread out in front of him.

"I um...I wanted to talk to you," Clara answered his earlier question. "Are you busy?"

"Oh, um, no...I'm not busy," he replied awkwardly.

"Can I sit?" She asked tentatively, gesturing to his bed.

"Uh, sure," he agreed, watching as she sat down close to him.

Her eyes roved around his room, taking it all in. Of all the times they had studied at his house together, she'd never been in his room.

"I didn't see you at lunch today," she commented, returning her gaze to him.

"Oh, yeah, I was in the darkroom," he revealed. "I had some photos I wanted to develop."

"So I see," she smiled knowingly, gesturing to the photos scattered in front of him. "Can I look at them?"

"If you want," he murmured, unsure of himself.

He handed her the photos he hadn't hidden and observed her as she looked through them. They were mostly of scenery around Hawkins, with a couple of Will and his friends thrown in there too. Slowly a grin formed on her face and her eyes shone with admiration.

"These are so good," she complimented. "You're so talented!"

"Thanks," he said, smiling at her praise.

She looked back up at him, causing his breath to catch in his throat.

"Can I see the others?" She enquired.

Jonathan's eyes widened in shock as he quickly began to panic.

"What others?" He asked, attempting to play it cool but failed miserably.

"The ones you hid under your pillow," she said with a raised brow. "Don't think I didn't notice! You don't have to be shy, Jonathan. You're really talented."

"I don't think you'd like them..." he tried to discourage her.

"I'm not going to judge you," she disputed.

Jonathan battled internally with himself. On one hand he wanted to refuse to let her look at the pictures, but that would almost definitely cause a misunderstanding and he didn't want to upset her. On the other hand, he knew he would die of embarrassment and risk her never talking to him again anyway if he *did* show her.

In the end, he decided to give in, knowing how persistent she could be when she really wanted to be. Sighing, he pulled the photographs back out, face down, but didn't hand them over just yet.

"Just...before you get mad, at least let me explain why I took them, okay?"

She nodded with a happy smile and held her hand out expectantly.

Reluctantly, he handed them over. He watched her intently as she turned the pile over and saw the first picture, her expression morphing into one of complete shock.

"Oh my God," she breathed out.

"Please let me explain!" He hurriedly said.

She continued to look down at the photographs, flipping through them with a thoughtful expression on her face. Jonathan watched her in anticipation, unable to do anything else. They were all photos he had taken of her without her knowledge, capturing specific moments that he wanted to remember.

"These are really good," she said, looking back up at him.

"W-what?" He stammered, unsure if he'd heard her right.

"I mean, it's *weird*," she conceded. "And I want to know why you took them. But they are really good. Can you teach me how to do photographs like these?"

"*What?*" He was thoroughly confused by her reaction.

"Okay, like I said, it's weird that you took pictures of me like this," Clara continued. "But I'm not mad or anything. My dad does this for a living, and I want to follow in his footsteps."

"Uh, what exactly does your dad do?" Jonathan asked cautiously.

"Oh," Clara said, realising she'd never told him. "He's a private investigator."

Suddenly the pieces of the puzzle fell into place. Jonathan knew that Clara wasn't very good or knowledgeable when it came to photography, but she was taking the class because it was necessary for her chosen career. He'd never known what career she wanted, but now it all made sense. Clandestine photography was a big part of private investigation.

"But, Jonathan?" Clara asked, gaining his attention once again.

"Yeah?" He responded, still bewildered by the situation.

"Why *did* you take these pictures?" She questioned, looking down at the photographs still in her hands.

"I don't know if you'll really understand..."

"Try me," she smiled at him.

"I don't know... I guess that when I see a moment worth capturing, I photograph it."

Clara nodded, showing that she understood where he was going.

"That makes sense," she mused. "Plus, these photos feel more genuine than ones that are posed for."

"Yeah, exactly," he said, perking up when he saw that she understood.

"I mean, in essence that's the main reason why a P.I exists. If people knew someone was there, watching them, waiting to catch them in the act, they'd never do the wrong thing in the first place and the truth would never be uncovered."

"Yeah..." Jonathan said gently.

"But you never told me why all of these pictures are of *me*," she said, nudging him softly with her shoulder.

He looked away from her, suddenly self-conscious.

"I guess I just find you fascinating," he admitted softly.

"Really?" She asked, and he looked up at her again to find her grinning at him.

He nodded and her smile softened.

"Well, if we're being honest here, you've intrigued me for a long time too," she admitted.

"You don't have to say that just to be nice," he told her, still uncertain that this could all be real.

"I'm not," she argued. "I told you, I'm being honest."

He looked at her – *really* looked at her – and didn't see anything but honesty in her eyes. She shifted slightly closer and reached out to grab his hands. He let her, too stunned to move and felt as her fingers lightly ran over his.

"Jonathan," she let out in a whisper. "Last night...was that a spur of the moment thing, or...?"

He frowned, not really sure what she was asking. She seemed to realise his confusion and decided to elaborate for him.

"I mean, was it genuine on your part?"

He paused, thinking over her words. He considered lying, telling her it didn't actually mean anything, but the way she was looking at him told him that being honest would work in his favour at that moment.

"It was genuine," he confirmed shyly.

She smiled coyly, looking down at their hands. He felt cold when she pulled her hands away but it was only for a fleeting moment, because the next thing he knew she was cupping his face in her hands. She looked at him like he was the only thing she could see.

Jonathan felt his face heat up, not accustomed to the close proximity. His mind filled with thoughts of the past 24 hours, and how she had proved to him that she returned his feelings at least on *some* level. Before he could talk himself out of it, he decided to throw caution to the wind and closed the space between the two of them until his lips were pressed firmly against hers.

Their kiss was more passionate than the previous night, and more confident. She moved her arms around his neck and ran her fingers through his hair. Jonathan squeezed her waist, loving the feeling of her against him. As the kiss deepened, their lips began to move in sync against each other and he felt drunk on her. Her mouth opened slightly wider and he slid his tongue into her mouth, eliciting a small moan from her that sent shivers down his spine.

Jonathan never wanted the moment to end, but eventually they had

to part and catch their breath. He continued to hold Clara close to him and felt her rest her head on his shoulder, small arms wrapped just as tightly around him. He savoured the moment, relishing in the feeling of being able to hold her so close. He couldn't believe that he'd just kissed her *again*. They stayed like that for what felt like eternity, but ultimately he felt Clara softly pull away, though not too far.

"Jonathan?" Clara asked softly.

"Mmm?"

"What are we?"

He was stunned, completely unsure of what she meant or where the question had come from. He voiced his confusion and she took a moment to answer him.

"Well...I mean..." she seemed unable to get the words out, and he grabbed a hold of her hand to try and soothe her.

"It's just, I've liked you for a really long time," she admitted.

"Really?"

"Yeah," she looked down at their entwined hands.

Jonathan suddenly realised what was making her so nervous and squeezed her hand gently to get her attention.

"I've felt the same way for a long time too," he told her.

"Really?" She asked, repeating his earlier question.

"Yeah," he chuckled.

"So..."

"So...?"

"Can I be your girlfriend, then?"

He pulled away from her slightly, shocked by her question. He

couldn't believe that she'd just straight out asked him like that, but then again she *was* the bolder out of the two of them...

"Are you serious?" He asked breathlessly.

"Yes," she replied, giving him a wide smile.

Not able to form words, Jonathan simply nodded, still in a bit of a daze at the whole situation. Defying what he deemed possible, Clara smiled even *wider* before leaning forward to kiss him again. It was a soft, gentle, loving kiss, portraying her sincere feelings and Jonathan couldn't believe that he was not in a dream.

When she pulled away from him she moved her arms to rest on his shoulders and looked at him bashfully. He wrapped his arms back around her waist, squeezing her gently.

"So, I'm your girlfriend then?" She asked, looking as though she was in disbelief.

"Yeah," he confirmed, not quite believing it himself.

Jonathan's gaze softened as he looked at her, seeing how happy she was at the idea. He didn't know what he'd done for her to return his feelings, but all he cared about was the fact that she wanted to be his, and he was going to make sure that she never regretted it.

3. Never Wanna Make You Change

I hate this chapter and I really shouldn't be posting it, but I just can't seem to get it to the point where I approve of it and I just want to move on, so here goes...

I'm sorry for the quality, but I'm going to try and make future chapters much better. I also apologise for the continued awkwardness between Jonathan and Clara in this chapter, but I felt it was necessary. It didn't seem realistic for them to suddenly be comfortable in a relationship overnight. So you can kind of think of this as a transition chapter. The next chapter will take place a few weeks after this and they will be more comfortable with each other. It will also be more Clara/Jonathan centric.

"Viv, you're never going to believe what happened!" Clara exclaimed, twirling her finger around the cord of the telephone.

"What?" Viv asked, a little confused due to the fact that Clara had bombarded her with the question the second she answered the call.

"Jonathan Byers is now my *boyfriend*!" Clara revealed, trying to keep her voice down so her mom wouldn't hear, but failing due to her excitement.

"*What!*?" Viv almost yelled. "Are you serious?"

"Yeah, I went 'round to his house this afternoon," Clara explained.

"Tell me everything!" Viv demanded excitedly.

Clara paused, knowing that she shouldn't really tell Viv about the pictures. Her friend more than likely wouldn't understand, and she knew that Jonathan had been uncomfortable at the idea of *her* seeing them, let alone anybody else.

"We were looking through some photos," Clara decided to say.

"And?"

"And... We were talking and one thing led to another and then I just asked him if I could be his girlfriend!"

"Wait," Viv said in disbelief. "*You* asked *him*?"

"Yeah..." Clara hesitated. "Why? What's wrong with that?"

"I don't know, I guess it's just a bit unconventional is all..." Viv elaborated. "I mean, usually doesn't a guy ask a girl, and not the other way around?"

"So? It's not like it's an absolute rule," Clara defended.

"No, but he might feel intimidated if you keep taking the lead all of the time."

"Do you really think so?" Clara asked, suddenly unsure of herself.

"Look, I don't want to bring down your good mood," Viv explained. "It's just... men like to feel in control. It might just be a good idea to let him be the one to make the decisions."

"What is this?" Clara laughed. "The middle ages? Come on, Viv! Besides, he didn't seem put off by it. He actually looked kind of relieved that I asked."

"Hmm," Viv hummed, considering Clara's words. "You're probably right. You know him better than I do..."

"Yeah..." Clara said with a frown.

As ridiculous and out-dated as Viv's words seemed, she *did* have more experience when it came to dating. What if she was right?

"Did he kiss you again?" Viv enquired, rapidly changing the topic.

It worked to distract Clara from her thoughts, bringing a smile back to her face.

"Yes!" She gushed. "It was even better than the first time."

"Really? How?"

Clara blushed furiously. "Well... I don't know... I just felt kind of warm all over. It was like... No, I can't say it. It's too embarrassing!"

"Oh my God!" Viv laughed.

"What?"

"Nothing."

"*What?*" Clara demanded.

"You're just so innocent," Viv laughed harder. "It's adorable."

"Shut up!"

"What? It's true!" Viv defended. "I can't believe Jonathan Byers of all people brought out this side of you."

"I told you to shut up!" Clara grumbled.

"Okay, okay! I'll stop teasing you."

"Good."

"But seriously, did he really get you all hot and bothered?"

"No, Viv! Hör auf! I don't want to talk about it anymore."

Viv's only response was to laugh even harder, much to Clara's annoyance. Normally, her friend knew that when she spoke in German it wasn't a good idea to get on her nerves even further.

"What about you and Alex?" Clara retorted, turning the tables on her friend. "I haven't forgotten the way that you –"

"Okay! I'm sorry alright?" Viv instantly cut her off.

Clara smirked; she could almost *hear* Viv's blush. It served her friend right for teasing her so persistently.

"But I am happy for you," Viv continued, voice softer to show Clara that she was sincere.

"Thanks, Viv."

"You've liked him for ages, I'm glad that it's worked out for you."

Clara smiled, glad that her friend was supportive. She continued to talk to Viv for a long time until the girls decided to hang up and go to bed, ensuring that they get enough sleep for the next day of school.

"I don't know what to do!" Clara panicked the next morning.

She was standing with her friends, watching Jonathan from the opposite end of the school hallway.

"Do I go over and talk to him?" She continued. "Or do I have to wait until he comes and talks to me?"

Leroy rolled his eyes. "I don't care, do whatever you want. Just stop whining about it."

"Shut up, Leroy," Maddie intervened, pushing him aside lightly. "Just go and talk to him, Clar. He probably won't want to come up to you with all of us here."

"But don't you think she should play it cool?" Viv intervened. "Let him take the lead for once?"

Clara frowned, remembering what Viv had said the previous night. Maybe she *should* take a step back. She didn't want him to feel intimidated by her...

"Are you delusional, Viv?" Maddie argued, interrupting Clara's thoughts. "I can't see him being that confident overnight, when the whole school is here to watch! I reckon he's the kind of guy who likes to stay under the radar."

"Yeah?" Leroy challenged. "What makes you such an expert? You got a crush on him too?"

"What do you care?" Maddie snapped back, annoyed.

Clara groaned in defeat; her friends weren't helping her at all. She

turned to look at Alex who was standing back and watching the scene unfold with an amused smile. When he caught her gaze, the smile only widened.

"Come on, Al," Clara begged. "You're the voice of reason here! What should I do?"

"I thought *you* were supposed to be the voice of reason?" He retorted.

"Alex!" She pouted.

He sighed, rolling his eyes. "It doesn't matter anyway, he's already gone to class."

"What?" Clara asked, spinning back around.

Alex was right. While they had been talking about him, Jonathan had left his locker and headed to class. She hadn't even heard the bell ring.

"Maybe you guys should do the same," Alex continued, walking off to his own class.

Clara couldn't help but be disappointed. Both by the fact that she hadn't been able to speak to Jonathan, and also that she had let herself worry about something so stupid. Where had her confidence gone? She'd never worried so much about what people thought of her, content to just be herself. But she felt Viv's words niggling away at the back of her mind. What if Jonathan *did* want to take the lead? Did she need to step back?

Clara followed her friends to class, lost in her thoughts.

"Hey," Jonathan said later that day, making her jump.

Clara looked up to see him smile at her as he slid into the seat on her right.

"Hi," she replied, returning his smile.

"How are you?" He asked softly.

"Fine," she chuckled slightly. "You?"

"Fine," he repeated with a nod.

They sat in silence for a few moments, their lesson yet to begin and only a few other students in the room with them. Clara was painfully aware of the awkwardness that had settled between them. She wanted to say something. Rattle off like she usually did until he grew comfortable enough to easily converse with her. That was what they normally did. Yet, she held back, waiting for him to approach her first like Viv had advised. But he didn't. Jonathan didn't say a word. He just looked at her with a mixture of confusion and concern.

Their teacher entered the room after a short time, and their attention was preoccupied with photography. When the class ended, Clara waited to see if Jonathan would talk to her again, and even though he did, she couldn't help but feel disheartened.

"Well, um, see you later, I guess?" He asked her nervously as they gathered up their books.

"Yeah," she nodded half-heartedly.

He gave her another small smile before walking out the door, but Clara was worried that it hadn't reached his eyes.

She couldn't focus on her next class. Thoughts of Jonathan completely occupied her mind. She couldn't help but be annoyed at herself. She knew that the way she'd acted in photography had thrown him off. Whether Viv was right or not, Clara knew that she shouldn't make assumptions. She didn't want to make things even more awkward between them, and so she resolved to seek him out at lunch and make things comfortable between them again.

When Clara entered the cafeteria at lunch, she was only mildly surprised to see that he wasn't there. She checked the darkroom, but he wasn't there either. When she walked outside of the school building though, she found him sitting underneath a tree eating by himself. Smiling, Clara quickly walked over to him. He looked up at her with a bewildered look on his face, eyes following her as she sat

down beside him.

"I'm sorry," she said simply, relaxing against the back of the tree.

"For what?" He asked, confused.

She thought it was adorable, the way his brow furrowed in puzzlement, his eyes squinting slightly due to the glare of the sun. Already she felt more at peace, now that she'd stopped worrying about what he might think, and just being herself.

"I'm sorry for being so awkward around you earlier," she elaborated.

"Oh..." he said, still seeming a little bit unsure.

She watched him for a moment, the wind slightly ruffling his hair, the light brown strands drifting in front of his face. She reached out and gently pushed some of it away from his eyes, causing him to look at her with a slightly annoyed look. She quickly retreated her hand, wondering if what she'd done was wrong.

"Are you embarrassed?" He asked suddenly.

Her eyes widened and her mouth gaped open in shock.

"What?"

"Are you embarrassed by me?"

"What? No! Why would you think that?"

He watched her carefully, making her feel uncomfortable under his scrutiny.

"You barely even talked to me in class," he said. "This is the most you've said to me all day, but we're alone."

"It wasn't because of that," she mumbled, looking away from him.

He waited for her to elaborate, but when she didn't he stood up and went to leave. Panicking, Clara blurted out words without even thinking about them beforehand.

"I wanted to let you take the lead!" She cried out.

He turned back to face her, looking even more confused.

"What?"

She sighed, trying to sort out her thoughts. "I was talking to Viv, and she said that you might be intimidated if I kept taking the lead all of the time..."

She watched as he hesitated before moving back over to the tree, and sitting back down beside her. He thought about her words for a moment before suddenly letting out a quiet chuckle.

"What's so funny?" She asked, self-conscious.

"That's so stupid," he laughed a little louder.

"Hey!" She protested, offended.

"Sorry," he tried to repress his amusement. "But it is a bit asinine... I mean, what would Vivian Ainsworth know about how I feel, or what I think?"

"I guess so," she mumbled, seeing his reasoning but still looking unsure of herself.

"I don't think you're intimidating," he reassured her, taking her hand in his. "You're sure of yourself and confident. You don't let anything stand in your way and I really like that about you."

"Really?" She asked, smiling shyly at him.

"Yeah," he confirmed, squeezing her hand gently in his. "I wouldn't change a thing about you Clara, so don't pretend to be someone else thinking that it'll make me happy, because it won't."

Her eyes went wide in a mixture of admiration and surprise. Leaning forward, she gently kissed him. He wrapped his arms around her, pulling her closer and she relaxed within his hold. Pulling away after a moment, Clara brushed some hair away from Jonathan's eyes again, happy that this time the action seemed to be appreciated by him.

"I'm sorry I made you think I was embarrassed," she murmured. "Please don't ever think that. I'd never feel like that."

"It's okay," he said just as quietly, arms still wrapped around her. "I should have known anyway."

"Yeah," she agreed with a teasing smile. "You should have! I wouldn't change a thing about you either. I like you exactly the way you are."

He grinned back at her, eyes shy but filled with happiness. She leant forward to kiss him again briefly, loving the feeling of his lips against hers.

"Why are you sitting out here?" She asked curiously after she'd pulled away again.

"I like the quiet," was all he said.

"Yeah, it's nice," she agreed. "Should we make this our spot?"

"Huh?"

"You know, should we make this our lunch spot? Just for the two of us."

Clara had to suppress a giggle when she saw how flustered he was.

"What about your friends?" He asked hesitantly.

"Well, I mean, you're welcome to sit at our table. I just thought you'd prefer it if it was just the two of us."

He thought about it for a moment before nodding. "Okay."

"Okay?"

"We can make this our spot," he agreed.

She beamed, shifting so that she could loop her arm through his. They sat together like that for the rest of their lunch break; Clara occasionally rambling about something while Jonathan listened attentively. When the bell rang, he walked her to class, his hand still

clasping hers. He felt uncomfortable under the curious eyes of their class mates, but Clara's confidence and complete disregard for whatever anyone might think, helped to put him at ease. She wasn't embarrassed by him. In fact, she looked down right *proud* to be walking beside him, showing everyone that they were together. He couldn't help but smile to himself, the happy feeling not leaving him for the rest of the day.

Again, I really don't like this chapter, so any feedback would be very much appreciated!

Also, Viv didn't show her best side in this chapter... She's a bit close-minded and can be judgemental too, and that really came out here, but she has good qualities too. I wanted to highlight that taking other people's advice instead of trusting your gut doesn't always have the best results. Not only that, but communication is the key to all good relationships. Jonathan and Clara are so different to me and my high school boyfriend, so I'm finding them a little hard to write sometimes.

Lastly, Clara's family background (including why she speaks German) will be revealed in later chapters. It didn't seem natural to put in the narrative here.